

DESIGNING PROGRAM WORKSHOPS
FOR TEENAGE PARENTS:

LESSONS FROM THE TEENAGE
PARENT DEMONSTRATION

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DESIGNING PROGRAM WORKSHOPS FOR TEENAGE PARENTS: LESSONS FROM THE TEENAGE PARENT DEMONSTRATION

From 1986 through 1990, the States of New Jersey and Illinois conducted the Demonstration of Innovative Approaches to Reduce Long Term AFDC Dependency Among Teenage Parents--also known, and referred to here, as the Teenage Parent Demonstration. With grants from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), awarded in September 1986, the States of New Jersey and Illinois implemented Teenage Parent Demonstration (TPD) programs in the fall of 1987, as **Teen Progress in** Camden and Newark, New Jersey, and as **Project Advance in** the south side of Chicago, Illinois. The general features of these programs are reflected in some of the major provisions concerning adolescent parents in the Family Support Act of 1988 (FSA) and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training program it created.

In these sites, all teenage parents of a single child who began receiving AFDC for the first time for themselves and their child were required to attend a baseline intake session, and were then randomly assigned, for evaluation purposes, to program or control status. Those assigned to program status were required to participate in appropriate education, training, or employment activities as long as they were receiving AFDC. The programs provided case management support, child care assistance, allowances for transportation and other training-related expenses, and a variety of workshops designed to develop the teenagers' personal life skills, motivation, and ability to pursue continued education, training, or employment. Those assigned to control status could not receive the special services of **Teen Progress** or **Project Advance**, and were not required to participate in education, training or employment, but were **free** to pursue other sources of training and education on their own. Through December 1989, a total of 5,752 eligible teenage parents had been identified and referred to the demonstration in the three sites (1,184 in Camden, 1,223 in Newark, and 3,425 in Chicago).'

The experiences of these two States in operating this demonstration program of education and training services for teenage parents provide valuable lessons for other jurisdictions as they develop initiatives to serve adolescent parents under the provisions of the Family Support Act of 1988. This report is the second in a series on various aspects of the design and operations of programs

'Project Advance completed intake for the research sample in September 1989, and Teen Progress in March 1990. All three sites have continued operating their programs and enrolling new participants (who will not be included in the research sample), in order to maintain the program environment affecting the research sample. In the Chicago site, the total number of eligible referrals through December 1989 included approximately 120 such referrals made after September 1989.

for teenage parents on **AFDC**.² It describes how the Teenage Parent Demonstration programs used workshops--group sessions combining instruction and discussion on topics relating to the life problems of teenage parents. The report describes:

- Major lessons from the demonstration concerning program workshops
- The types of workshops offered in the demonstration
- The contribution of workshops to overall program goals
- Issues that program administrators should consider in designing workshops as part of a teenage parent component of the JOBS program
- Approximate costs for program workshops, based on experience in the Teenage Parent Demonstration

MAJOR DEMONSTRATION LESSONS CONCERNING WORKSHOPS

The experience of the New Jersey and Illinois sites running workshops in the Teenage Parent Demonstration suggests the following broad conclusions:

- Initial workshops for new program enrollees can serve several functions: provide instruction in important life skills, help teenage parents begin developing the social skills and personal discipline necessary to participate in training and eventually a job, and help program staff assess new enrollees' readiness for educational and training activities
- The length of initial workshops is an important design decision. Short workshops of just a few days provide a quick introduction to important life skill topics that can readily be completed by most new participants, but allow only limited substantive instruction. Extensive workshops lasting several weeks provide more opportunity for developing participants' motivation and discipline and for substantive instruction, but they also create greater administrative burdens for rescheduling and enforcing participation requirements. Shorter **workshops** are more easily completed; where **three-day** workshops were used in the demonstration, 89 percent of all new participants completed some initial workshops, compared to

²The first paper dealt with identifying and enrolling teenage parents in mandatory employment and training programs. Subsequent papers in this series will present findings concerning the provision of education and training activities, the role of the case manager, and possibly other topics.

56 percent and 35 percent at sites where the full sequence of initial workshops lasted 4-6 weeks or more.

- If extensive initial workshops (several weeks or more) are planned, program staff should expect sanctions or sanction warnings to be needed quite often to establish the seriousness of program participation requirements; 25-50 percent of the participants in the New Jersey sites--where workshops extended over 4-6 weeks--were either warned of sanction action or had their grams reduced for failure to attend initial workshops.
- Program staff can promote attendance at initial workshops by providing prompt assistance with child care arrangements or on-site child care, and by scheduling workshops at various times of day to accommodate participants' school, training, or job schedules.
- Of several options for staffing workshops, it appears most effective to have an in-house program coordinator who can lead some workshop sessions and--if other resources are also used--coordinate the scheduling of outside workshop leaders and monitor their performance. Relying solely on case managers to lead workshops encroaches on the time they can devote to individual participants, and limits the special expertise that is desirable in workshops dealing with topics such as health, nutrition, and family planning.
- Workshops for ongoing program participants can be used selectively for defined groups with particular needs, such as those preparing to enter job training or job search. It is relatively inefficient, however, to schedule "special" workshops that are given only occasionally; considerable effort is likely to be needed to schedule and plan such events and recruit participants to attend. There is no effective way to make attendance at such occasional events mandatory.
- The cost of initial workshops varied widely in the demonstration, ranging from as little as \$18 per person enrolled in the program to as much as \$529 per enrollee. The variation in cost was due to wide differences in the overall duration of the workshop sequence and in the extent of reliance on contracts with outside experts to lead the workshops.

THE DEMONSTRATION WORKSHOPS

Participants in Teen Progress and **Project Advance** were generally expected, as long as they were receiving AFDC, to be active in one of the program's major components: job training, employment, or education (continuing high school, a **GED** or adult basic education program, or post-secondary education). In addition to these major program components, all three sites offered workshops. These workshops were meetings that provided a forum for instruction, presentations by a workshop leader and in some cases by guest

speakers, group discussion, and in some instances films related to workshop topics.

Two Types of Workshops: Initial and Ongoing

Two types of workshops were offered: initial workshops and ongoing workshops. After completing the intake **session**,³ newly enrolled participants in each site were required to go through a prescribed set of initial workshops, over a period as short as three days in one site and as long as several months in another. When they had completed these workshops, a “self-sufficiency plan” for continuing activity was developed, prescribing the education or training or, in some cases, job search activity they would pursue **next**.⁴ Initial workshops were therefore offered on regular, quite frequent cycles, so that new participants could enter them as quickly as possible after enrolling in the program. The workshops covered topics that program staff judged to be important for all new program participants.

Ongoing workshops, on the other hand, were used more selectively. They were designed to meet the needs of particular groups of program participants, and were generally offered less frequently. Some ongoing workshops--for example, the Camden site’s six-week Pre-Employment Workshop to help participants prepare for the demands of finding and keeping a job--were conducted on regular repeating cycles. Other ongoing workshops--such as those held on AIDS, drug abuse, planning for the future, and other topics at the Chicago site--were more like special events held once or twice per year. Participants were generally scheduled into the next available session of an appropriate ongoing workshop when it became clear that they needed and could benefit from the workshop material, and when the time demands of the workshop could be accommodated in their schedule of other activities. In some instances, ongoing workshops became transitions or preparation for other activities.

Most Initial Workshops Dealt with Personal Life Skills

Program staff at the three demonstration sites designed initial workshops to help new participants direct and control their own daily lives, maintain their

³The intake session for the demonstration entailed completing a “baseline questionnaire” and taking the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).

⁴In some instances an initial plan was developed before participants attended workshops, but in most such cases it simply laid out the schedule of workshops the participant was required to attend. Later a longer-term plan was developed.

own and their children's health, and face the personal challenges of preparing for self-sufficiency. Initial workshops were offered on:⁵

- Motivation/Self-Esteem and the World of Work: To help participants identify their own personal strengths and self-defeating behavior patterns, recognize the possibility and importance to them and their children of making decisions to improve their lives, take responsibility for their own future, and prepare emotionally for the rules, discipline, and behavioral demands of future employment
- Life Skills: To strengthen participants' ability to cope with the challenges of daily life and changes in their lives, including teaching them how to communicate effectively, establish goals and make decisions, manage their time and money, and deal with incidents of racism and sexism
- Family Planning: To help participants recognize the importance and possibility of taking control over their sexual lives and child-bearing, understand the advantages and disadvantages of various forms of contraception and how to use them properly, and grasp the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and how to avoid them
- Health and Nutrition: To impress upon participants the importance of sound eating habits for them and their children, teach them economical ways to shop for and prepare nutritional meals, and encourage proper use of medical services and preventive care for them and their children
- Child Support: To "demystify" the child support enforcement process and correct misconceptions about how it works, demonstrate to participants the long-term importance to their children of establishing paternity and a legal support obligation
- Parenting: To help participants understand the stages of child development, recognize and respond to children's physical and emotional needs at different ages, handle the stresses of responsibility for a child, and confront concerns about the use of child care
- AIDS/Drug Abuse: One site offers a special workshop with 18 hours of discussion and instruction on drug abuse, AIDS, avoiding high-risk behaviors

⁵The topics listed here correspond generally to the specific titles that the sites assigned to workshops. Some topics were the subject of a distinct workshop in one site but may have been a subject included in a more broadly defined workshop in another site. Not all sites offered initial workshops on all of these topics, but each site covered these topics either in an initial workshop or a later ongoing workshop for selected participants. Some changes in the list of workshops offered were made during the course of the demonstration.

- **Personal Grooming:** To convey information about commonly accepted standards of dress, hygiene, and behavior at different types of workplaces

Ongoing Workshops Were for Participants in Particular Circumstances

Although each of the three demonstration sites covered most of the topics listed above in their mandatory initial workshops, each site also offered certain ongoing workshops for active participants. In some cases, these ongoing workshops were for participants identified by Case Managers as having a particular need. In other instances, workshops were defined to help participants prepare for a new challenge or make a transition. These ongoing workshops included:

- **Special Parenting Workshop:** The Newark **Teen Progress** site offered an intensive workshop of ten sessions over five weeks conducted by a clinical psychologist and a pediatrician, for participants identified as at particularly high risk of child neglect or abuse. The workshop had a more therapeutic approach than the initial parenting workshops, although it dealt with many similar issues: child development, children's needs, coping with stress, and the participant's relationships with her parents and her child's father.
- **Pre-Employment Workshop/Job Club:** All three sites conducted structured sessions with participants who were preparing to enter the labor market for permanent full-time or part-time employment or summer jobs. **Project Advance** offered a three-session Job Club workshop focusing on job search methods, completing job applications and preparing resumes, and how to dress for and behave in an interview. A Job Service employment specialist attended one session each cycle to begin working on individual job placement. Camden Teen Progress required participants who were not in school to attend Pre-Employment Workshop sessions daily for six weeks, and supplemented the job search topics with basic skills brush-up. Newark **Teen Progress** conducted job-preparation in one-on-one counseling with participants who had completed the, Motivation/Self-Esteem workshop and were ready to look for a job.
- **Education Preparation Workshop:** **Project Advance** offered a three-session workshop for participants who were about to enroll (or reenroll) in high school or a remedial education course, or who were having difficulty in school. The workshop attempted to instill organized and effective study habits, help participants plan time for their schoolwork, and understand the resources available to them through the educational system. Program staff viewed this short workshop as an important way to increase participants' chances of benefiting from their education activity.

- Home and Family Life Management Workshon: **Project Advance** did not offer an initial workshop focusing on life skills, but conducted periodic workshops on homemaking skills, time and money management, comparative shopping, and home safety. Participants were scheduled into these workshops if they were between other activities, or if staff discovered that they were particularly unpracticed in basic home skills such as laundering, cooking, or maintaining basic home cleanliness.
- Pre-Natal Workshon: Every two weeks, **Project Advance** offered a three-session workshop conducted by a nurse or a counselor from a local women's center, focusing on proper nutrition and health care during pregnancy, and emotional preparation for childbirth and parenting.
- Topical "Special-Event" Workshops: Particularly at **Project Advance in Chicago**, short, often single-session workshops were used to present and discuss subjects viewed as important issues for teenage parents. When commitments were obtained from outside experts to conduct these workshops, program staff reviewed their caseloads and invited participants who they believed could benefit from the sessions. These workshops were given on topics such as motivation and problem-solving, career awareness, abstinence and other methods of birth control, drug and alcohol abuse, personal grooming, and dealing with rape and sexual assault.

PURPOSES OF **THE** WORKSHOPS

Although the demonstration sites had clearly defined topics and substantive curricula for their workshops, program staff viewed the workshops as serving much broader purposes than just conveying important information. They saw the workshops as serving to initiate and socialize new participants to the program, and provide opportunities for further assessment of participants' strengths and needs.

Initial Workshops Can Help New Participants Become Accustomed to the Program

For many of the teenage parents in the demonstration, it represented a new set of demands and experiences. According to program staff, many of the teenage parents were unaccustomed to meeting appointments or adhering to any daily routine or schedule. Many participants proved to be socially isolated and unaccustomed to situations in which they had to deal with demands placed on them by newly encountered figures of authority, or interactions with a new set of peers. Program staff were keenly aware that to succeed in any future workplace, the teenage parents would have to learn the personal skills needed to deal with the expectations and tensions generated by **both** kinds of relationships.

As a result, program staff viewed the initial workshops as a valuable socializing experience for new participants. At the New Jersey sites, where initial workshops extended over a period of at least four weeks, the sequence of initial workshops was referred to as “boot camp,” because it imposed rigorous attendance demands and immersed each new cohort of demonstration participants in a common introductory experience that for some required considerable adjustment of attitudes and habits. One site manager viewed this aspect of the initial workshops as even more important than their instructional value; although staff hoped that participants would learn information and skills that were presented in the workshops, some staff felt that the more important successes of workshops were measured in changes in the way participants behaved as they interacted with program staff and their program peers. Program staff noted the following changes as indicators of workshop success:

- Initial hostility and resistance to attending program workshops soften as participants recognize the supportive attitude of program staff
- Participants become less reticent and reserved and begin to express their feelings and thoughts in workshop discussions
- Participants begin to form relationships with their peers and develop a common sense of involvement in the program

Initial Workshops Provide an Opportunity for Further Assessment

Case managers had to assess the skills of new participants, their interests, and the personal and family circumstances that affected them, and work with them individually to develop a plan of activities to work towards self-sufficiency. A major factor in this process was participants’ levels of education and basic skills; intake and assessment questionnaires and testing in math and reading skills were used to collect this information. Program staff reported, however, that important characteristics of new participants could be missed with these methods. Observing and interacting with new participants during initial workshops provided more subtle insights into their strengths and weaknesses and personal problems. Even though the case manager to whom a new participant was assigned was not necessarily involved in the workshops and would thus not make direct observations, workshop leaders communicated their perceptions to the relevant case managers.

ISSUES IN DESIGNING WORKSHOPS

A variety of issues had to be resolved as demonstration staff defined their program workshops. Although program staff at the three demonstration sites agreed on the value and importance of workshops, they followed three quite distinct approaches to integrating workshops into the overall demonstration.

Project Advance Used a Short Sequence of Introductory Workshops and a Variety of Topical Workshops Available to Ongoing Participants

Project Advance in Chicago required new participants to go through a **three-** day sequence of short workshops on six topics, totalling nine hours, all conducted by program Case Managers. More in-depth discussion of workshop issues was provided later by case managers in their individual dealings with participants. Later, program staff scheduled selected participants for ongoing workshops offered on a regular repeating cycle (e.g., Home Life Management workshop, Education Preparation, Job Club, Pre-Natal Care). Invitations to “special-event” workshops, conducted only occasionally or at long intervals, were sent to a large list of active clients, and usually a smaller, manageable size group attended.

The Camden Teen Progress Site Required an Intensive “Boot Camp” of Initial Workshops Before Other Program Activity

The Camden **Teen Progress** site required new participants to go through a sequence of initial workshops that spanned at least four **weeks** and required about 78 hours of total attendance. Outside consultants and staff from other service agencies were used extensively to run **workshops**.⁶ The workshop cycle was structured so that new participants had virtually a full-time schedule of workshop activity for four weeks, and then went on to other education, training, or job search activities. The only Camden workshop for ongoing participants was a six-week program of Pre-Employment Preparation for participants getting ready to look for a job. In some instances, these participants were judged at assessment or upon completion of a training course to be ready for the job market; in other instances, participants were scheduled into the Pre-Employment if they resisted pursuing recommended education or training or failed to complete such activities or comply with their requirements.

The Newark Teen Progress Site Integrated Extensive Initial Workshops with Education and Training Activities

At the Newark demonstration site, an extensive program of initial workshops required over 100 hours attendance in sessions dealing with family planning, HIV syndrome and drug abuse, nutrition, and life skills. The individual workshops extended over as much as six weeks, and sometimes had conflicting schedules. As a result, it was difficult in Newark to provide new participants with a compressed, full-time schedule of workshops. Instead, staff developed a schedule of “classes” for each new participant, consisting of a combination of workshops and appropriate other activities such as on-site remedial education classes, or JTPA-funded job training (if the participant had adequate

⁶**Towards** the end of the demonstration, special program staff were designated to conduct workshops previously run by outside consultants, to reduce costs and maintain closer control over workshop quality.

basic skills). Many participants thus followed, for as much as several months after their enrollment, a school-like schedule of classes at the program site, centered around an on-site remedial education class, and supplemented by the various initial **workshops** as they became available and could fit into the participants' schedules.⁷

These three approaches to the use of workshops reflected the sites' decisions on issues that must be addressed by any agency planning to incorporate workshops in a program for teenage parents. There are no "right" answers to these issues, because each solution has its advantages and disadvantages.

How Long Should the Initial Workshops Be?

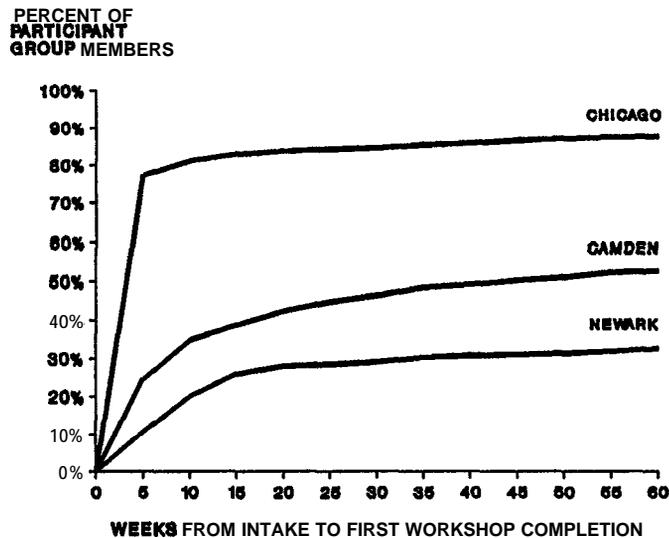
In defining the extent of a sequence of introductory workshops, program planners should consider the implications of the **Project Advance** and **Teen Progress** approaches. The extensive initial workshops in the New Jersey sites seemed to provide greater opportunity for socialization and formation of peer relationships, which are important objectives of initial workshops. For those who participate, it is clearly possible to explore and develop topics in more detail than is possible in an initial workshop sequence of just a few days.

Extensive initial workshops have their disadvantages, however. Given the time commitment required for the New Jersey workshops, the Camden and Newark sites had to defer workshop activity for new participants who were in school at the time of **enrollment**, until the next school vacation. If initial workshops span just a few days, as at **Project Advance**, program staff may be able to arrange with local school officials to recognize the workshops as a valid educational activity, so that all new participants go through the initial workshops immediately. Some program staff felt that it was difficult to hold the teenage parents' attention and make effective use of the workshop format over a period of several weeks, and that it was more important to make it possible for new participants to move as quickly as possible into substantive education or training activity.

Workshop completion rates at the three demonstration sites show how much easier it is for new participants to complete the initial workshop stage if it is brief. As shown in Figure 1, the time required for participants to complete even a first initial workshop was much shorter in Chicago with its compressed three-day cycle than in the New Jersey sites where the workshop sequence was more extensive. In Chicago, 73 percent of all participant group members had completed at least one workshop within the first four weeks after intake, and **67** percent within the first two weeks. In Camden and Newark, in contrast, only 18 and 8 percent, respectively, had completed a workshop within the first

⁷The Newark site also offered an intensive six-week ongoing workshop in Parenting Skills for participants identified as at high risk of child abuse or neglect. This workshop was discontinued because of its high cost and the difficulty of developing a suitable curriculum for small groups.

FIGURE 1
PERCENT OF PARTICIPANT GROUP MEMBERS
COMPLETING ANY INITIAL WORKSHOP
BY WEEKS AFTER INTAKE



four weeks. This difference was due not only to the time required for the workshops, but also to the fact that longer workshops increase the likelihood that participants will have to restart or be rescheduled for later workshop cycles when they fail to complete all of the workshop requirements the first time. Workshop duration clearly **contributed** not only to differences in how **quickly workshops** were completed, but also to whether participants completed them at all. In Chicago, 89 percent of the demonstration participants completed at least some initial workshops; in Camden and Newark 56 percent and 35 percent, respectively, completed at least one initial workshop.

In setting the length of initial workshops, agencies should also be aware of and plan for the administrative tasks associated with initial mandatory workshops: scheduling new participants for workshops, monitoring attendance, rescheduling participants who fail to attend, and imposing sanctions on those who do not comply with this aspect of program requirements. **Long** workshops involving multiple sessions over a period of several weeks create substantial opportunity for noncompliance. If the requirement to attend and complete workshops is treated seriously and only minimal absence is allowed operation of long workshops is likely to involve a considerable administrative burden to monitor attendance and insist on workshop completion. Long initial workshops constitute a serious program participation demand; sanction actions relating to workshops are thus more likely.

What are the Advantages and Limitations of Different Types of Workshops?

Each approach to using workshops in the Teenage Parent Demonstration had its strengths and weakness. The demonstration sites used workshops in three ways: initial workshops for all new participants, regularly scheduled “cyclical” workshops for ongoing participants, and “special event” workshops.

Initial workshops are the surest vehicle for delivering information to the broad spectrum of program participants. New participants can be routinely scheduled for the next cycle of workshops. Since a clearly and readily identified cohort of new participants is scheduled for each workshop cycle, it is relatively straightforward to treat the workshops as mandatory activities, monitor attendance, take sanction action when necessary, and reschedule participants for the next cycle if they fail to attend the required number of sessions for each workshop. Problems of scheduling participants into workshops are most manageable for initial workshops; with the exception of those attending school, most new participants should be able to attend initial workshops without delay.

The workshops for ongoing participants, however, could be designed to focus more closely on the needs of particular participants. Initial workshops do not target resources on participants who most need help in particular subject areas. For example, initial workshop sessions dealing with work place behavior, job applications, and resume preparation are less relevant to the youngest teenage parents for whom continued school attendance or reenrollment in special remedial classes is usually the focus of program plans, rather than short-term preparation for the job market. For some topics, therefore, ongoing workshops for selected subsets of the participant population may be more effective.

“Special-event” **workshops** for ongoing participants--used extensively in the Chicago demonstration site--pose special problems for staff in preparing the workshops and promoting attendance. Whereas initial and cyclical workshops were typically arranged through negotiated contracts or staff assignments, special-event workshops required **finding** appropriate **workshop** leaders, selecting dates when the workshops could fit into their schedules, and then promoting the event. Although program staff viewed these **workshops** as very valuable and important experiences for participants, they did not classify them as mandatory activities, because their infrequent scheduling made it impossible to reschedule participants who failed to attend and insist that they attend a later session. As a result, staff sometimes made extensive efforts to arrange a special workshop and invite large numbers of participants, but ended up actually delivering the workshop activity to a small group of participants.

Who Should Conduct Workshops?

The demonstration sites staffed their workshops in three different ways; each had some advantages and disadvantages:

- In Chicago, Project Advance Case Managers were entirely responsible for leading the three-day initial workshops. Most ongoing workshops were led by outside consultants (some paid, others volunteers).
- For most Newark and Camden workshops, the programs contracted with other agencies such as Planned Parenthood to provide workshop leaders.
- In Newark and Camden, in-house program staff were designated to conduct certain initial workshops, either in addition to their work as case managers, or as a full-time role.

Staffing decisions were clearly linked to other program design issues. Most clearly, the workshop staffing approach hinged on the extent of the workshop component. The heavy input of personnel time needed to conduct the extensive Camden and Newark workshops more or less required that they be led by dedicated staff--specially assigned program staff, or contracted topic specialists from outside the program. Only in a program with very brief initial workshops, as in the Chicago site, is it realistic to assume that regular case managers could lead the sessions.

Using regular case managers to run **workshops** has several advantages. As they run workshops, the case managers become acquainted with new participants and their problems. For those participants who are assigned to their caseloads, the workshops thus become a fruitful further assessment opportunity. Even for those participants assigned to other case managers, the workshop leaders can serve as a valuable conduit of information to help other case managers understand their new clients. Finally, using regular case managers to run workshops--and limiting the extent of the workshop component--holds down program costs.

Relying on case managers to run workshops, however, adds to the strain on case management staff and limits the special expertise available in the workshops. Using case managers is really only feasible where the case management staff is large enough that responsibility for running workshops can be rotated among the staff, and imposes only a periodic additional task on each case manager; otherwise the time they have for their own caseloads is too seriously eroded. **However**, case managers who ran Project **Advance** workshops only every 2-3 months reported that they did not have time to become and remain truly up to date on the topics they were discussing--particularly with regard to workshops covering issues of physiology, health, and medical care. If case managers take turns running workshops, program managers should take particular care to provide initial and refresher training to equip case managers to lead such workshops. Even for the very limited introductory workshops held at Project Advance, case managers eventually came to the conclusion that it would be preferable to assign special program or contract staff as workshop leaders.

The Camden and Newark demonstration sites tapped various community resources for initial workshop leaders with more specialized skills (and the Chicago site did so for some ongoing workshops). Under contracts or in some instances no-cost inter-agency agreements, workshop leaders came from local Planned Parenthood Associations for family planning workshops, from county extension services for nutrition and life skills workshops, a non-profit drug rehabilitation program for an AIDS/drug abuse workshop, and several small local non-profit agencies for life skills and grooming workshops.

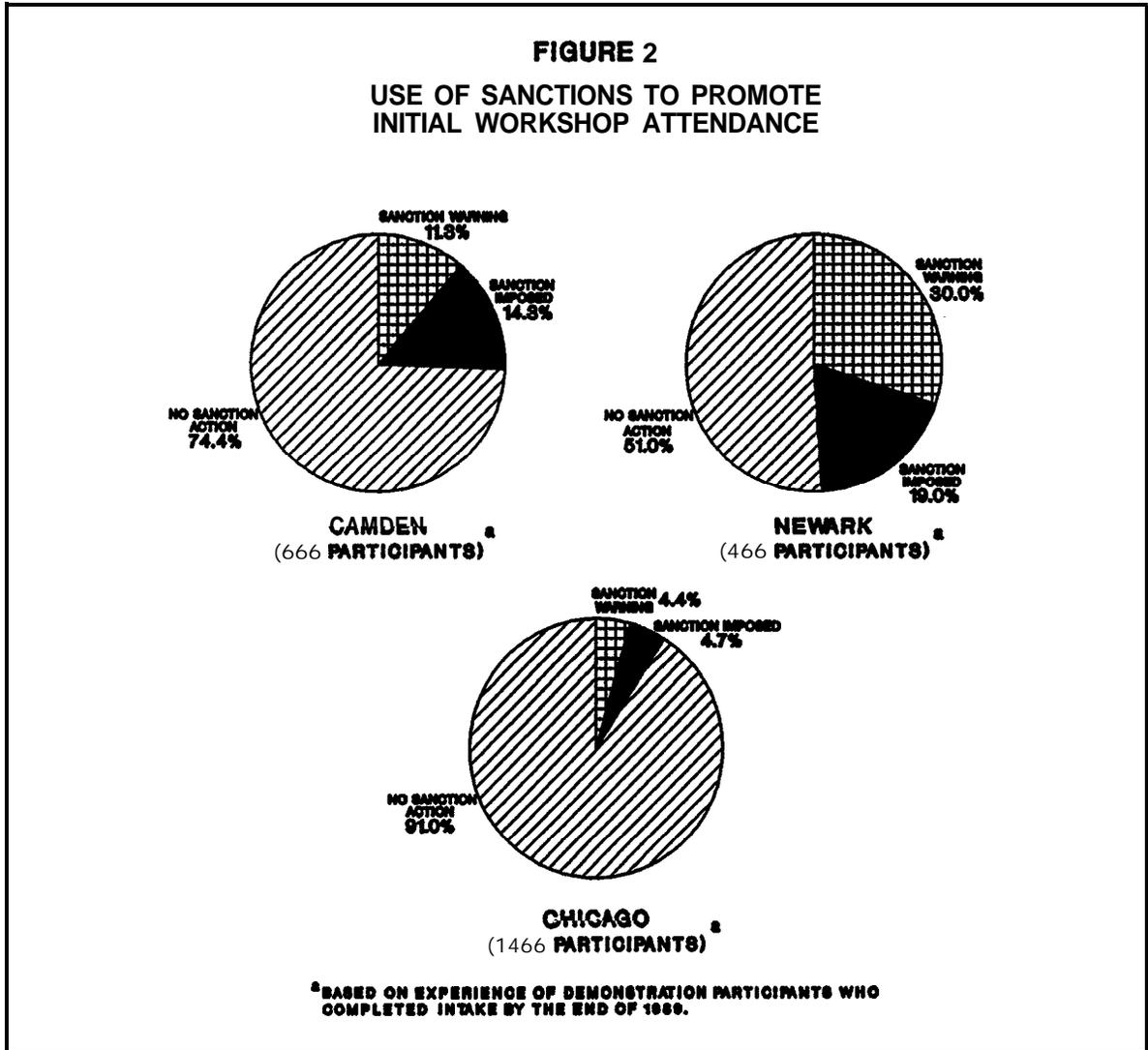
To the extent that outside staff are used to conduct workshops, care must be taken to maintain communications between these workshop leaders and the case managers who will work with the new participants, to take full advantage of the “assessment input” value of the workshops. In addition, program staff need to observe workshop sessions periodically, monitor the presentation approaches and material used by outside consultants, and assess the quality of staff assigned by outside organizations to run workshops.

Overall, the most promising staffing approach observed in the demonstration seems to be the “in-house **workshop** coordinator” approach developed over time in the Camden site. Part way through the demonstration, the Camden program director assigned a single staff member (a former case manager) to lead the Life Skills workshop, coordinate the scheduling of all initial workshops, and monitor the content and delivery of workshops led by outside staff. This workshop coordinator met with individual case managers regularly to discuss special issues or problems pertaining to individual participants observed in the workshops. This structure seemed to offer the advantages of specialized workshop leaders as well as close in-house monitoring and coordination of workshop curricula and approach.

How Can Workshop Completion be Promoted?

Whatever the length of their initial workshops, the demonstration sites all came to realize that special efforts were needed to encourage many participants to fulfill workshop attendance requirements. On the one hand, the programs found it necessary in many instances to use sanction warning notices and actual sanction grant reductions to promote workshop attendance. On the other hand, a flexible approach to scheduling new participants for workshops was also needed.

The sanction process was used quite often to encourage participants to attend required initial workshops, particularly in New Jersey where the workshops were quite extensive. As shown in Figure 2, some steps in the



sanction process--either a warning notice for failure to attend or an actual grant reduction--were taken with about a quarter of the teenage parents who entered the **Teen Progress** program in Camden and **almost** half the Newark program. Grant reduction sanctions for **failure** to attend workshops were imposed on 14 and 19 percent of all these participants in Camden and Newark, respectively. Given the brevity of the initial workshops, **in** Chicago, sanction actions to promote workshop completion were far less often needed; Some form of sanction action was taken with 9 percent of Chicago enrollees, and only about 5 percent had grant reductions imposed because of failure to attend initial workshops.

Sanction actions arising from noncompliance with workshop requirements were used with substantial but not complete success to promote further program participation. Of all New Jersey participants who had completed intake by December 1989, and who were subsequently sent a warning notice or were actually sanctioned for failure to attend workshops, about half went on to some further participation in program activities--completing a mandatory workshop, entering some other activity, or both. In Chicago, despite some ambiguity in the available data, it appears that sanctions were successful 75 to 85 percent of the time in getting participants to complete further activity, in almost all cases including the mandatory workshops.

Flexibility was also essential in encouraging workshop completion, for several reasons. On the one hand, program staff realized--particularly in the New Jersey sites where workshops demanded a substantial time commitment--that teenage parents still attending school could not be expected to miss school for workshops. In addition, it became clear that for some participants, daily life crises, lack of motivation or habits of sticking to schedules, and other commitments such as medical appointments could interfere with workshop attendance. The sites took several approaches to dealing with these problems:

- Deferring workshop attendance to summer months for participants attending school
- Scheduling particular workshops alternately for cycles meeting in the morning or the afternoon, to make it more feasible for participants with other school or work commitments to fit the workshop into their schedules
- Rescheduling participants for a later workshop cycle when their attendance at the originally scheduled sessions was disrupted

The availability of child care and assistance in covering the costs of transportation also proved important. All sites provided help in finding child care providers if necessary, paid the providers, and gave participants weekly stipends to cover the cost of public transportation. In addition, all of the sites made some arrangement for on-site child care--ranging from a special **child-care** room with a full-time staff person, to informal "baby-sitting" by Case Managers or other staff as needed. On-site care was useful for participants attending on-site workshops or other activities, and particularly important for initial workshops because new participants may not yet have had time to identify a provider arrangement for the longer term, and may still be wary of leaving their babies in the care of others. When on-site care was not available at the demonstration sites, some participants inevitably brought their children to the workshops, which caused disruptions.

As an alternative to on-site care for the workshop period, program staff can help new participants find suitable child care providers and provide assistance in paying for care. Given the time and effort sometimes required to make

child care arrangements, this approach may not be feasible in a program designed to move new participants rapidly into and through a very short sequence of **workshops**, as at the Chicago demonstration site. In such programs, on-site care is likely to be particularly important to the smooth operation of initial workshops. Helping with outside child care arrangements to promote initial workshop attendance is more feasible in a program with a more extensive workshop component that may be seen as meriting a greater investment of staff time to ensure that participants will be able to attend.

WHAT DOES IT COST TO PROVIDE WORKSHOPS?

If workshops are to be part of a teenage parent program, planners must obviously allocate resources for them. If workshops are to be conducted by outside specialists under contract, the estimated cost of these contracts would be included in the budget. If case managers are expected to conduct workshops, the portion of their time that will be devoted to workshops must be taken into account when the required number of case managers is projected. If designated program staff will specialize in leading or monitoring workshops, the portion of their time that will be devoted to workshops needs to be considered.

The Teenage Parent Demonstration provides some basis for estimating the resources required for workshops of various designs. We estimated the cost of the initial mandatory workshops at the three demonstration sites in the period July 1988 - June 1989, including the explicit cost of contracts for outside workshop leaders as well as the implicit cost of time spent on workshops by program staff and donated staff from other agencies.

The Cost of Initial Workshops Ranged from \$18 to \$529 Per Person Entering the Program

The resulting estimates of initial workshop costs correspond to the differences in workshop intensity described earlier. In Chicago, initial workshops were limited to nine hours per cycle and the primary workshop cost was for the time of the case managers who took time out from their caseloads to run the workshops.⁸ With this "low-intensity" model, the overall cost of initial workshops in Chicago was estimated at \$12,705 per year, or about \$18 per teenage parent who completed program intake. Initial workshops were a very minor portion--about 1 percent--of total program expenditures. In the New Jersey sites, where initial workshops were considerably more extensive, costs were correspondingly higher. In Newark, where the program used a mix of case managers and outside contracts, initial workshops cost an estimated \$41,260 in the period July 1988 - June 1989, or about \$273 per enrollee. In Camden, the intensive four-week curriculum of initial workshops cost an estimated \$99,892 over this period, or about \$529 per enrollee. In Newark

⁸We estimated that for each cycle of workshops, a case manager spent nine hours leading workshops and an additional six hours preparing for the **workshops** and maintaining attendance and other records.

and Camden initial workshop costs were approximately **9** and **13** percent of total program costs, **respectively.**⁹

The considerable difference in workshop costs between the Newark and Camden sites corresponds to differences in the approaches the two sites took to scheduling workshops. In Camden, all of the initial workshops were scheduled as an intensive “boot camp” period during which new enrollees would normally complete all workshops. Using this approach, the Camden program could schedule complete “packages” of workshops back-to-back, and thus made heavy use of each leader or outside provider of workshop services throughout the year. In Newark, less priority was placed on creating an intensive workshop schedule, since workshop attendance was interspersed with other activities such as remedial education classes or training. As a result, each initial workshop was repeated less frequently in Newark than in Camden, and less use was made of the providers involved in running workshops.

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⁹The cost of initial workshops relative to total program costs is somewhat overstated, since current estimates of total program cost do not include implicit amounts for **JTPA** training programs or remedial education classes in the community that were pursued by program participants but not explicitly paid for out of demonstration funds, whereas the estimated cost of initial workshops includes the implicit value of workshop-related services obtained by the program at no fee.

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